

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 remain in this application. An amendment to claim 11 has been proposed to make it consistent with claim 1. Applicants believe that entry at this time is proper to place this application in condition for allowance or better form for appeal. Claims 1-3 and 5-11 were rejected as anticipated by Sandhu et al. and claim 4 as obvious over Sandhu et al in view of Southwick. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. For the reasons given below, Applicants believe all claims should be allowed and respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider his rejection.

Sandhu et al. (USP 5,975,994) discloses a polishing pad 142 for polishing a wafer 110 and a conditioning element 170 for conditioning the polishing pad 142 in Figure 2 or 4. Applicants, on the other hand disclose a first grindstone surface plate 51 for grinding a wafer 55 and a small-diameter diamond grindstone 101 for dressing the first grindstone surface plate 51 in Figs. 7 and 8, for example. Southwick (USP 5,782,675) also discloses a polishing pad that is the same as the pad disclosed in Sandhu et al.

The first point of difference that must be noted is that the function of using a polishing pad is not the same as that of using the grindstone. The polishing pad is conditioned by the conditioning element 170 in Sandhu. The present specification discloses a polishing pad of this nature in the section entitled "Background Art," from line 9 of page 2 to line 2 of page 3. Further discussion of the use of a polishing pad and problems associated therewith are found from line 27 of page 6 to line 24 of page 10 in the specification. Here it is described that the polishing pad is dressed to provide a suitable surface roughness by applying a fixed load to the grindstone to press it to the rotating polishing tool and there are three problems.

In contrast, in the present invention, a grindstone is used for grinding the wafer in place of a polishing pad to solve the problems as described in lines 2-11 at page 11 in the specification.

The second point of difference is described at lines 13-20 of page 19 in the specification. The vertical position of small-diameter diamond grindstone 101 is maintained by a control

system 107. This sizing-dressing is different from the way of which the conditioning element is pressed to the polishing pad 142 disclosed in the prior art by applying a fixed load as noted above. Applicants submit that there is no teaching in the reference of controlling position rather than force. Note for example the discussion in Sadhu et al. at Col. 6, line 62 to Col. 7, line 23. Here, control of down-force, not control of position is discussed.

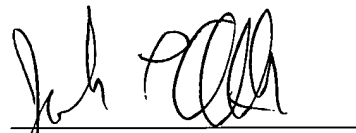
In view of the above noted differences, Applicants believe that all claims remaining in this application are in condition for allowance, prompt notice of which is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 220-4200 to discuss any information concerning this application.

Applicants respectfully request a three month Extension of Time to respond to the Office Action of July 19, 2004. The extended period expires January 19, 2005.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge the fee of \$980.00 for a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,



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